

2004-0444

ATTACHMENT 3

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Draft Minutes

February 14, 2005

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PLANNING COMMISSION DRAFT MINUTES OF 02/14/05

2004-0444 – City of Sunnyvale Study Issue – To consider revisions to the Sunnyvale Municipal Code 19.44 to allow additional commercial signage for Automobile Dealers and Large Retail Stores. DO **(Also to City Council on 03/01/05)**

Andrew Miner, Project Planner, on behalf of Diana O'Dell, presented the staff report. He introduced Connie Verceles from the Economic Development Division and stated that she would be available to answer questions regarding the outreach meeting conducted for the Study Issue. Staff summarized the Study Issue highlighting the primary goals and modifications to the sign code. Staff recommended the adoption of the ordinance as recommended by staff in attachment H.

Comm. Simons asked staff if there is future consideration or perhaps giving a section of a street a dual name. Ms. Trudi Ryan, Planning Officer, responded that the post office does not accept dual names.

Comm. Babcock asked staff if there was an area in the staff report where it addresses signs, flags, and banners on interior poles besides noted in the discussion portion. Ms. Ryan stated that staff was not recommending any modifications to that section but noted the opportunity to add festive banners is allowed.

Comm. Babcock then referred to attachment H page 1 of 6 where it refers to "Multi-Tenant" and asked staff if service and parts were separate from auto sales and if they were considered multi-tenants. Staff responded service associated only with on-site purchases would not be a tenant, but that auto service typically would be a separate tenant.

Comm. Babcock further asked if it is considered a separate business when you pay separately for a car part but then carry it over to repair. Ms. Ryan referred to the ordinance and stated that "Multi-Tenant" includes separated service businesses that are not dependent on the sale of goods from other businesses on-site.

Vice Chair Hungerford referred to Attachment H page 3 of 6 regarding the sign length and asked staff if you can have a sign that takes up 2/3 of the front of the building or can extend 2/3 along the length of the building. Ms. Ryan clarified that the length of the sign is 2/3 and is not 2/3 of the whole square footage. Vice Chair Hungerford confirmed that the maximum square footage of the sign was a constraint. Staff agreed.

Vice Chair Hungerford then referred to Attachment H page 4 of 6 and commented on the logo regulations. He asked staff if there was a constraint in the total square footage of a logo. Ms. Ryan stated that logo square footage counts towards your total signage square footage.

Vice Chair Hungerford requested clarification where it states that no sign shall exceed 250 square feet in area. He then asked staff about maximum sizes relative to other cities. Ms. Ryan stated that she would research the information and get back to him.

Chair Moylan opened the public hearing.

Chair Moylan announced that the Commission received a copy of an e-mail from Mark Balestra regarding the issue.

Adam Sims, representing Sunnyvale Auto Row, stated that collectively as a group they have 17 automobile franchises along El Camino Real, 12 dealerships and about 1,500 employees. Mr. Sims thanked staff and Commissioner Babcock for all their hard work. He then stated that largely they are in support of the recommendations however, in regards to the addresses being on the sign itself, he asked that further consideration be taken because they all have store front glass and the Department of Motor Vehicles regulations requires them to have 10- inch addresses at the front of the entrances that are clearly posted. Mr. Sims then referred to the ground signs and stated that a good portion of the current 10-foot ground signs they currently have are blocked significantly by the cars out in display. He stated that the different needs of the dealers are between the 10 and 25-foot range. He felt that the 10-feet they currently have is relatively restrictive. Mr. Sims then spoke about the directional signs and stated that safety was their significant concern in regards to the directional signs.

Chair Moylan asked Mr. Sims if there was anything about the staff proposal that he would like to request be changed. Mr. Sims responded that he would like staff to return to them with a workable recommendation around the directional signs. Chair Moylan asked Mr. Sims to clarify what he meant by directional sign. Mr. Sims responded that he would like to have signs with arrows indicating in or out for sales, parts, rental cars and that would be easy for customers to see at the rate of speed they are going when driving on El Camino Real.

Harriet B. Rowe, member of the public, expressed concerns with the allowable size of balloons and the landscaping along El Camino especially in the parking lots. She asked if the moving signs referred to the arrows that point to the housing developments and restaurants. She then referred to page 6 of 13 and stated that when she met with some citizens they were concerned with all businesses having larger numbers to identify their businesses and stated that it does not help when you tell your auto dealer that they have to have their signs larger when you have stores that have numbers that you cannot see. Ms. Rowe stated that it is a hazard to be driving slowly looking for a street sign. She then referred to page 7 of 13 and commented that having a lot of auto dealers together attracts the people. Ms. Rowe agreed with the United States Sign Council that states that more is not necessarily better and larger is not necessarily better. She asked the Commission to consider what Mr. Sims stated about the signs directing people. She then referred to page 9 of 13 and stated that she agreed that signage is for essential business identification and not

primarily for advertisement or marketing. She stated that she would not want to go larger than 20-feet.

Ms. Ryan responded to the question Vice Chair Hungerford had regarding size of signs in other communities. Ms. Ryan stated that in Attachment D a brief summary about other communities and pointed out that Palo Alto currently has a maximum of 130 and are studying it and Santa Clara allows 900 and 600 square feet. Los Gatos does not have a limit and is based on the amount of street frontage that is associated with the total signage. San Jose, Capitol Expressway allows up to 300 square foot maximum. She stated that it puts Sunnyvale in the middle.

Chair Moylan closed the public hearing.

Comm. Babcock made a motion on Item #2004-0444 to adopt the Ordinance as recommended by staff with a request that staff continue to work with the automobile dealers and large businesses on taking a look at directional signs. Comm. Fussell seconded.

Comm. Babcock stated that she felt it to be an excellent compromise and still maintain the look of the boulevard. She stated that she does not go out to test drive cars as a hobby and stated that she was amazed at how difficult it was to actually find each one of the automobile dealers. She also stated that it was very difficult to find directional signs. Comm. Babcock agreed with the speaker that larger is not necessarily better but too small can also be dangerous. Comm. Babcock was very much in support of the Study Issue.

Comm. Sulser supported the motion. He stated that he thinks that it really simplifies the ordinance and makes it easier to understand.

Comm. Fussell supported the motion. He stated that the document was very well prepared. He stated that there is a fine balance and gave the example of his 6 year old daughter's lemonade stand and the flashing lights of Las Vegas and felt that the proposal finds that balance and will help the business to compete.

Chair Moylan stated that the more interesting aspect of the problem, pointed out in the staff report, was that the signs are considered to be part of free speech and stated that the way the ordinance is written is completely fair and really liked it a lot. He complimented staff on being able to introduce a partial solution to another Study Issue on fixing address sign size.

Motion carried unanimously 7-0.

Ms. Ryan stated that the Planning Commission recommendation will be forwarded to the City Council for their review on March 1, 2005.

